



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

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## Paper no 5

Pygmalion BY G.B.Shaw

### Act 1

Act I opens in Covent Garden under the portico of St. Paul's Church during a heavy summer rain immediately after a theatrical performance has let out. All types and levels of society are huddled here to avoid the rain. Mrs. Eynsford-Hill is complaining to her daughter Clara that her son Freddy has been gone an intolerably long time in search of a cab. When he suddenly returns with the announcement that there is not a cab to be had for love nor money, they reprimand him for not trying other places and quickly send him off to try again in another direction.

As Freddy reopens his umbrella and dashes off, he accidentally collides with a flower girl, who is hurrying for shelter, and knocks over her basket of flowers. In a heavy, almost incomprehensible, Cockney accent, she familiarly calls him by his name (Freddy) and tells him to watch where he is going. She then sits and begins to rearrange her flowers, mumbling to herself about the carelessness of such people who knock others about.

Mrs. Eynsford-Hill, who has heard the entire episode, is consumed with curiosity as to how this low-class, badly dressed ragamuffin with such a dreadful accent could possibly know her son well enough to call him by his first name. The flower girl (Liza or Eliza) asks, first, if the lady will pay for the flowers that Freddy just ruined, and against Clara's objections, Mrs. Eynsford-Hill pays the girl generously and then learns that Eliza merely calls all strangers either Freddy or Charlie.

At this moment, "an elderly gentleman of the amiable military type" rushes in for shelter. Eliza immediately tries to sell him some flowers, but he refuses because he has nothing smaller than a "sovereign." Eliza badgers him by insisting that she can change a large coin. Suddenly, a bystander warns the flower girl to be careful because there is a stranger who is taking down everything she says. Frightened that she might be accused of soliciting for immoral purposes, Eliza loudly maintains her right to sell flowers "if I keep off the kerb." Her loud and continual protestation attracts everyone's attention until finally the notetaker (Professor Henry Higgins) tells her to "shut up." He resents the fact that she mistakes him for a policeman or a spy for the police. Eliza wants to see what he has written, and when she can't read the "shorthand," he reads off what he has written. It is an exact Cockney phonetic rendition of her own speech patterns.

At this point, the elderly gentleman (Colonel Pickering) and others take the girl's side, and as the group begins to talk to the notetaker, he (Professor Higgins) begins to identify where each of the



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B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

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SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

speakers was born and where they live. He can even identify their locality inside the city of London. When Mrs. Eynsford-Hill complains about the weather, the notetaker (Higgins) points out that the rain has stopped, and everyone disperses except the gentleman (Colonel Pickering) and the flower girl (Eliza).

When the gentleman inquires about the notetaker's talents, he discloses that he is a student of phonetics; in fact, his profession is teaching wealthy people who aspire to climb the social ladder to speak properly. While he explains his profession, Eliza continually makes unutterable, horrible sounds, even though Higgins constantly tells her to cease making these "detestable" noises; he then brags that "in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party." (In the next act, the time is "six months, three if she has a good ear.")

When the elderly gentleman identifies himself as a "student of Indian dialects," by the name of Colonel Pickering, author of *Spoken Sanskrit*, Higgins then introduces himself as Henry Higgins, author of Higgins' *Universal Alphabet*. It turns out that Pickering came to England to meet Higgins, and that Higgins was about to embark on a journey to India to meet Pickering. As they are about to leave together to discuss their mutual interests, Eliza interrupts with a plea for money saying, "I'm short for my lodging." Higgins reminds her she is lying because she had previously said that she could change a half-a-crown; nevertheless, he throws her a mess of coins which she excitedly scoops up, accompanied by all sorts of unintelligible Cockney sounds.

At this point, Freddy Eynsford-Hill returns with a cab, but doesn't know what to do with it since everyone has left. Eliza, thanks to the sudden windfall of money from Higgins, engages the cab to take her home, leaving Freddy alone and perplexed.

## Analysis

*Pygmalion* is perhaps Shaw's most famous play and, ironically, it is among his most abused and misinterpreted ones. Almost everyone knows the basic outlines of this story of the Cockney flower girl who is almost magically transformed into a duchess by taking speech (phonetic) lessons from her famous professor. The abuse comes partly from the fact that Shaw subtitled his play, "A Romance." In the popular adaptations (the film of 1938 and the musical *My Fair Lady*), "romance" was written into the script and inserted into the relationship between Higgins and Eliza — in fact, the title of the play, *Pygmalion*, being based on the legend of a person who fell in love with his creation, could easily give rise to this wrong interpretation. In fact, one advertisement claims that the play is one of the most "beautiful love stories" that the world has ever read. Yet, as noted elsewhere, Shaw used the term "romance" in its more restricted form, meaning the implausibility of actually transforming a flower girl into a grand duchess by the simple means of using phonetic instruction. Yet, in spite of Shaw's own pronouncements and in



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B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

spite of all the evidence in the play, readers and audiences still continue to sentimentalize over the outcome of the play and refuse to recognize the anti-romantic aspect of the drama.

The opening scene of the drama captures many of the diverse elements running throughout the play. Brought together by the common necessity of protection from a sudden downpour, such diverse types as the impoverished middle-class Eynsford-Hills, with their genteel pretensions and disdain, a wealthy Anglo-Indian gentleman (Colonel Pickering), who seems quite tolerant, a haughty egotistical professor (Higgins), who seems exceptionally intolerant, an indistinct group of nondescript bystanders, and a pushy, rude flower girl who embodies the essence of vulgarity gather. These diverse characters would never be found together except by the necessity of something like a sudden rain shower. This serves Shaw dramatically because he needs a variety of accents so that Professor Higgins can demonstrate his brilliance at identifying dialects and places of birth, according to his science of phonetics. Note also that his performance arouses both antagonism and appreciation in the crowd. The antagonism is based upon the fact that the crowd, at first, believes that he is a spy for the police, and second, even after identifying where they come from, he is intruding upon some private aspect of their lives which they might want to cover up — that is, due to false pride or snobbism, many people want to disguise the place of their birth; thus, Professor Higgins, they think, in identifying the backgrounds of some of the members of the crowd is also revealing something about their pasts. Ironically, Professor Higgins' occupation is teaching wealthy people how to speak properly so that they can conceal their backgrounds. In the next act, Eliza will come to him so that her own origins can be concealed from the public.

Shaw is also dramatically exhibiting two types of vulgarity here: first, the vulgarity of the lower class, as seen in Eliza, and second, the "refined" vulgarity of the middle class, as seen in Clara Eynsford-Hill. We should remember that one of the aims of the play is an attack (through the character of Alfred Doolittle) on middle class morality and restrictions. Eliza's vulgarity is a result of necessity, forcing her to wheedle a few coins from bystanders; it is both comic and pathetic. Her vulgarity is comic as she tries to cozen money out of the bystanders, and it is vulgarly pathetic when she is suspected of soliciting as a prostitute. Unjustly, Eliza can be falsely accused of prostitution because she belongs to a class of society where prostitution is an assumed practice, and she can also be pigeonholed in a class of society which cannot afford a lawyer for protection. Consequently, Eliza can only prove her innocence of such a charge by loudly proclaiming to everyone "I'm a good girl, I am." Ultimately, the most vulgar thing about Eliza is her disgusting and animalistic use of the English language, a habit that elicits the wrath of Professor Higgins and thus sets up the dramatic premise for the rest of the drama.

In contrast to Eliza, Clara Eynsford-Hill would superficially seem to be without a trace of vulgarity. But she represents aspects of the middle class which Shaw and Doolittle reject — that is, Clara is pushy, unfriendly, and disdainful of people whom she considers beneath her, and she



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

is offended unnecessarily by strangers (such as Higgins) who speak to her (notice her hypocrisy later in Act III when she meets Higgins socially and is sycophantly obeisant to him). Ironically, in the next act, Eliza will want to become very much like Clara and will come to Higgins to take lessons for that purpose.

It is Higgins who ultimately occupies center stage. At first, he is only the bystander at the edge of the crowd. Then he slowly takes charge because of his talent, his wit, and his domineering character. In a play that will focus a great deal on the varying concepts of manners, Higgins is first noted for his lack of manners. On first sight, he is as rude in his outspokenness as Eliza is crude in her pronunciation. He seems to take pleasure in bullying other people, especially people who are socially beneath him, even though he maintains that he is not a snob. He can spurt out a tirade of venom when he hears the English language so completely and disgustingly vilified, and he directs his venom directly at Eliza:

A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere — no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon. [We have standardized Shaw's unique grammar and spelling.]

Whether or not Higgins is right in his appraisal is not the point here; even though he is amusingly right, a man who would publicly utter such derogatory comments about another human being for the purpose of showing off in front of a crowd of people is certainly no gentleman. To the contrary, he is another type of vulgarian; he is a person without consideration for the feelings of others, one who is totally lacking in social manners, and his absence of manners will become the subject of Mrs. Pearce's concern in the next act, when Higgins decides to take Eliza into his house.

After the above speech, Higgins boastfully announces to the gathered crowd that "in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party." Consequently, this sentence provides the impetus for the remainder of the play, and it will evoke the larger questions of the drama — that is, do speech patterns determine the quality of a person's manners



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

and nature? Higgins will be able to teach her to pronounce words as a duchess would, but how important are phonetics in determining the true nature of a person's worth? Thus, as noted in the preface, Shaw somewhat misled the reader when he suggested that the play was about phonetics. Instead, Shaw is using phonetics only as a basis for a comment on manners in general. And Shaw's final comment on manners involves the comic display of manners as Eliza affects the manners of a grand dame in engaging the cab to take her home.

## Act 2

The scene shifts to Higgins' laboratory in his home in Wimpole Street. It is eleven o'clock the next morning, and Higgins has been giving Pickering some demonstrations of the types of equipment that he uses in recording sounds which can then be studied at leisure in a scientific manner. As Higgins finishes his demonstration, Pickering admits that he is impressed, but he hasn't been able to follow more than half of what Higgins has shown him. Mrs. Pearce, the housekeeper, enters to announce that there is a strange girl, "quite a common girl," downstairs asking for the professor. Higgins is puzzled, but he thinks that this would be a good opportunity to record her in Pickering's presence, particularly since she is reported to have an unusual accent. He will thus be able to show Pickering how he makes records, using various pieces of his equipment that he has been demonstrating.

Eliza, the flower girl from the preceding evening, enters. She is now dressed in an outlandish outfit, consisting of, among other things, three ostrich feathers of orange, sky-blue, and red. When Higgins recognizes her, he orders her away because he has already recorded enough of her type of "Lisson Grove lingo." Eliza, however, has come in a taxi, with a proposition. Higgins is not impressed and rudely inquires: "Shall we ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out of the window?" Pickering is more solicitous, and so Eliza turns to him and reveals that she wants to obtain a job as a lady in a flower shop, but she won't be hired unless she can speak in a genteel, ladylike fashion; thus, she has come to take speech lessons from Higgins because last night, he bragged about his ability to teach proper speech to anyone. She is even willing to pay as much as a shilling an hour (about twenty-five cents an hour, an absurdly ridiculous sum — so absurdly low, in fact, that it appeals to Higgins' imagination). Higgins calculates that Eliza's offer is a certain proportion of her daily income, and therefore represents, for her, a large payment. While he is considering the arrangement, Pickering, whose interest has also been aroused, makes a wager: "I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment," he tells Higgins, that the professor cannot teach Eliza to speak "like a duchess" in six months' time and pass her off at an ambassador's garden party as a "lady." Furthermore, Pickering says, ironically, "And I'll pay for the lessons," since the lessons are only twenty-five cents an hour. Higgins is indeed tempted — the challenge is tremendously great because Eliza is "so deliciously low — so horribly dirty — ." Thus he decides to do it: He "shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe" in "six months — in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue." He then orders Mrs. Pearce to take



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

her away, to scrub her down, to burn her clothes and to get her new ones. And if she makes any noise, he says, Mrs. Pearce should "wallop her."

Both Eliza and Mrs. Pearce are horrified over these suggestions. Mrs. Pearce suggests that perhaps the girl is married or that perhaps she might have parents who would object. But, as it turns out, Eliza's parents turned her out to earn her own living over two years ago. Once again, Higgins bullies the girl, ordering her about and ignoring her feelings to the point that Pickering reminds him that Eliza "has some feelings," but Higgins ignores the possibility and concentrates on the immediate problem with Eliza: it is not the pronunciation; it is the grammar that will be the problem.

Mrs. Pearce, before leaving, wonders what is to become of Eliza when they have finished with her. Higgins' response is a vague question about what will become of her if he leaves her alone; to him it makes no difference — when they are through, "we can throw her back into the gutter, and then it will be her own business again." When Eliza begins to revolt, Higgins tempts her with some chocolates and with the thought of some young man wanting to marry her. Eliza relents, and Mrs. Pearce takes her away to be washed.

Following up on Mrs. Pearce's suggestions, Pickering suddenly becomes interested in the morality of their adventure. He questions if Higgins is "a man of good character where women are concerned?" Higgins admits that he has never known how to deal with women, because the moment you "let a woman into your life," she becomes "jealous, exacting, suspicious and a damned nuisance." Furthermore, he says, the moment he becomes friends with a woman, he becomes "selfish and tyrannical." Thus, he is "a confirmed old bachelor" and plans to remain one, and he assures Pickering that he will not take advantage of Eliza.

Mrs. Pearce returns with Eliza's hat, which Eliza wants saved, and she asks Higgins to watch his behavior around the young girl; that is, he should try to cease swearing, use better table manners and try to act more like a gentleman. Mrs. Pearce then answers the doorbell and informs Higgins that a dustman, Alfred Doolittle, is outside and that he maintains that Higgins has his daughter inside. Pickering warns Higgins that this might be a trap, that Doolittle might be a scoundrel. Higgins is not perturbed and has the man sent for.

Doolittle is an elderly but vigorous man with a remarkably expressive voice. To the contrary of all expectations, there is no dissension because when Doolittle announces that he wants his daughter, Higgins agrees thoroughly; he tells Doolittle to "take her away at once." This both shocks and surprises Doolittle, who definitely does not want his daughter; after all, he has taken the trouble once to get rid of her, and he certainly doesn't want her back now.





# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

When Higgins maintains that it is "a plant — a plot to extort money by threats," Doolittle retracts. He maintains that he hasn't seen the girl for two months. As Doolittle talks, Higgins is captivated by the old man's Welsh accent and also by his "mendacity and dishonesty." Doolittle clearly does not want his daughter back; all he wants is a five-pound note in order to go out with his common-law wife and get drunk. When Pickering asks Doolittle if he has no morals, Doolittle quite honestly answers that he can't afford morals, and, furthermore, "What's a five-pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me?" Higgins is delighted with Doolittle's cynical view of middle-class morality as Doolittle proclaims himself to be a member of the "undeserving poor"; there has been too much attention paid to the deserving poor, he says, and it is time for the likes of him, who are undeserving, to reap some of the benefits of money. "Undeserving Poverty" is his motto, and if Higgins and Pickering give him five pounds, he promises that he will not save it; by Monday, he will have spent the entire five pounds on one single drunken spree with his "missus." Higgins finds the idea and the person irresistible; in fact, he considers giving the man ten pounds, but Doolittle demurs, saying that ten pounds might cause him to feel prudent, whereas five pounds is just enough for a spree. Delighted, Higgins hands Doolittle five pounds and, at that moment, Eliza enters, dressed in a new Japanese kimono. Her father doesn't recognize her at first and is genuinely surprised that she could ever get herself cleaned up to look as good as she does. Eliza immediately warns them all that her father has come for no other purpose than to wheedle money out of them in order to get drunk. Eliza is willing to drop her relations with her father and also to lord it over her old friends, but Higgins warns her not to drop her old friends too quickly. New clothes arrive then for Eliza, and she utters one of those unspeakable noises as she rushes out to see the new clothes: "Ah-ow-oo-oo!" Both Higgins and Pickering acknowledge that they have indeed taken on a "stiff job."

### Analysis

Whereas the first act gave us only a cursory view of Higgins, this act begins to round out many aspects of his personality. Shaw calls him the energetic type who is "violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject." Consequently, this clue in the printed discussion of his character should warn the reader that Higgins' relationship with Eliza will be based upon scientific experiments and that the human element will not be foremost in his mind. Likewise, Shaw tells the reader that Higgins fluctuates from genial bullying and good humor to a stormy petulance when things go wrong. Above all, Higgins is totally frank and devoid of any artifice or malice. On the stage, however, Shaw has to present these character concepts to the audience. He does this by having Mrs. Pearce, who has been Higgins' housekeeper for a long time, constantly speak about his character and his habits. The arrival of Eliza and, later, Higgins' instructions concerning Eliza allow Mrs. Pearce to make pertinent observations about Higgins' deportment, manners, language, and conduct. When she announces that a very common girl is at the door, we know immediately, from Higgins' reaction, that he is a bit eccentric. When he begins his dealings with Eliza, for example, he sees her not as a human being but as a "bit of baggage." In contrast, Colonel Pickering is more tender and solicitous. At one point, he reminds



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

Higgins that the girl might have some sensitive feelings, despite her "guttersnipe" exterior. This basic contrast between the two men will continue throughout the drama.

Eliza's reactions during this first visit by her father is indicative of her character. As is consistent with her class, she believes that if she can pay for the lesson, then Higgins has to be polite to her. Furthermore, she is determined that she shall not be cheated (her offer of a suitable fee for an hour's lesson is, to her, very serious; of course, to us and to Higgins, it is comic); as the scene progresses, Eliza is wary of Higgins; she is suspicious of being mistreated, drugged, seduced, or rejected.

After Higgins decides that he will accept the challenge of teaching Eliza to become a lady, two matters emerge. First, Mrs. Pearce wonders "what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little." This is the ultimate question for a practical woman, and it is a question repeated later by Higgins' mother. At the end of the play, it becomes the central point in Eliza's revolt from Higgins. Never during the course of the play does he seriously consider what is to be done with Eliza. Here, for example, he merely says that when he is done with her, "we can throw her back into the gutter." This view, however, will become the main topic for Eliza's later consideration, for by that time she will be trained in such a way that she will no longer be able to function in the gutter. Thus, already Higgins is insensitive and blind to his moral responsibility to another human being. The second matter involves not merely Higgins' teaching Eliza how to pronounce words correctly, but in teaching her the proper words to use and also the proper grammatical form. This concern will also prove to be the essence of the comedy in the next scene, when Eliza will narrate a story about the death of her aunt with impeccable pronunciation, but her choice of subject matter will be deliciously low and vulgar.

The original Pygmalion theme is now fully introduced. The creator, Higgins (Pygmalion) has found his stone Galatea in the person of Eliza (this sack of baggage, this squashed cabbage) — whom he will "carve" and mold into a great duchess, someone whom he can control and command.

When Mrs. Pearce takes Eliza away, we are hardly prepared for the immediate appearance of her father. The audience and Higgins alike expect an irate father, anxious over the safety of his youthful daughter; we expect him to demand honorable protection for his offspring. Alfred Doolittle, however, is just the opposite — and he is also one of Shaw's most delightful creations. At the time of Doolittle's appearance, Mrs. Pearce has been lecturing Higgins on manners and etiquette: If Eliza is to be in the house, Higgins must watch his language, stop appearing in house robes, cease wiping his hands on his clothes, refrain from cursing, and begin performing other acts of proper manners. With the appearance of Doolittle, the questions of social manners become parodied. The subject is replaced by the idea of social morality and especially middle-class morality (or low-class morality).





# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

As noted above, when Doolittle first appears, we expect the virtuous father, and we see the hypocritical blackmailer. When the blackmail plot is obviously going to fail, we are exposed to Doolittle's supposedly righteous indignation, and then we see it fade, and he becomes an unscrupulous and ingratiating pimp, willing to sell off his daughter's virtue for a mere pittance. Again, his bumbling attempts fail. But by now, Higgins is attracted to the resourcefulness of this intended blackmailer and to Doolittle's picturesque language; when Higgins demands an answer from Doolittle, the old man's rhetorical retort pleases Higgins. Doolittle says: "I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you." For Higgins, and for Shaw (who likes to take digs wherever possible), this sentimental rhetoric accounts for the Welsh dialect and also for Doolittle's mendacity and dishonesty.

When all else fails, thus, Doolittle resorts to speaking the plain truth, but it is a truth so original that it captures the imagination of both Higgins and Pickering. Whereas most charity goes to the "deserving poor," Doolittle dispenses with traditional morality and charity; he argues for some consideration of the undeserving poor. In a fanciful flight of philosophical oratory, Doolittle maintains that his type of people has been ignored, and it is now time to contribute money to someone like him who will take the money, go out on a weekend binge, spend it all on booze, and then be ready to go back to his miserable job on Monday. He maintains that he too has a right to this type of debauch, and yet he has been denied it by the narrow-minded prejudices of middle-class morality.

Higgins is so taken aback by this unique, bizarre logic that he offers to give Doolittle ten pounds, but Doolittle rapidly rejects this offer because that large a sum would entail middle-class responsibility, whereas the smaller sum would be just enough to go out on a binge with no regrets and no responsibilities. The irony of Doolittle's logic is that at the end of the play, Doolittle will be forced to accept middle-class responsibilities and morality because by then he will have inherited enough money that he will be encumbered for the rest of his life and will have to forever abandon his free and easy ways as a member of the "undeserving poor."

With Eliza's re-entry on the stage, Shaw returns to his social criticism. Eliza's father doesn't recognize his daughter because he "never thought she would clean up as good looking as that. . . . She's a credit to me, aint she?" Since Shaw didn't believe in a genuine poor class, he is making a gentle point that the possession of "hot and cold water" and "woolly towels," soft brushes, and soap can make a ragamuffin look entirely different. This scene emphasizes the basic difference between Eliza and her father: Doolittle likes being a part of the "undeserving poor," while Eliza yearns, above all, to escape from this class and to join the respectable middle class. This is the reason why she has come to Higgins: to take lessons in order to escape the stigma of her class. We are now able to review what we have read and see the significance of Eliza's howling when Higgins says that if Eliza misbehaves they will simply throw her in the dustbin — that is, her father's job is collecting the ashes and refuse of dust bins, and since he has already thrown Eliza out many years ago, she has no desire to be "collected" by him again. In fact, at the end of the



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

drama, one of the options that is open to Eliza is that she can return to her father, but she resolutely refuses to do so. And at the end of this particular act, Eliza shows her first bit of humorous class snobbism: now that she is clean, she would like to ride back to her old district and parade in front of her old cronies and lord it over them now that she "has risen in the world."

### Act 3

This act opens in Mrs. Higgins' drawing room on the day that she is receiving guests. She is frustrated and upset to find that her son has paid a call on her during her "at-home day." He promised her never to come when she had company because he and his manners always offend her guests. Today is no exception. He distresses his mother immediately by telling her that he has invited a girl to call on her, a girl whom he "picked up" and taught to speak properly in the matter of only a short time. Higgins wants his mother to notice not only how the girl pronounces her words, but also what she pronounces as she speaks.

The parlor maid enters and announces the arrival of Mrs. and Miss Eynsford-Hill, whose accents Higgins remembers, but he cannot remember where he actually met them. After introductions, Colonel Pickering is shown in, and he is followed shortly by Freddy Eynsford-Hill. Higgins is delighted that the company has expanded so that Eliza will be better tested in front of a moderately large group. After some brief exchanges, Miss Doolittle is announced, and Eliza, exquisitely dressed, enters with remarkable poise and distinction, exuding an air of complete self-possession. She has been warned to speak about only two subjects — the weather and health. (This will be especially comic later when she does indeed confine herself to the topic of her aunt's health, but her aunt's health is indeed bizarre.)

As Eliza is introduced, she greets each person with an elaborate "How do you do"; her pronunciation is uttered with impeccable precision. When the subject of the weather is mentioned, Eliza volunteers her observations in such an erudite and precise manner that it astonishes everyone. To the simple question, "Do you think it will rain?" Eliza answers: "The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation."

Having exhausted the subject of the weather, she thus ventures onto her other restricted subject — health — and announces the circumstances surrounding her aunt's death in the most precise English. The precision of her diction, of course, only heightens the lurid aspects of her aunt's death as Eliza narrates her tale in perfectly enunciated slang terms from the slums, exposing all of the bizarre and extraordinary aspects of her aunt's death. Higgins tries to cover some of Eliza's mistakes by referring to her language as the "new small talk," but Freddy, however, is delighted with the entire performance. He is clearly anxious to hear more and to accompany Miss Doolittle home, but Eliza, noticing Higgins' "Ahems," announces that she must go, that she must catch a



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

taxi. "Suffering from shock" (Shaw's phrase), Mrs. Eynsford-Hill sighs, "Well, I really can't get used to the new ways."

After Eliza leaves, Mrs. Eynsford-Hill continues to expound on the younger generation's way of talking, and her daughter Clara maintains that it is really quite up-to-date to talk in such a manner. Higgins mischievously encourages the young lady to try out some of the new slang on some of her mother's friends.

After the Eynsford-Hills leave, Higgins is exhilarated about Eliza's performance, but his mother points out that Eliza is not yet presentable — that is, Eliza is merely a "triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's," but that she reveals her social origins in every sentence that she speaks. Part of the trouble, she says, is that Eliza is adopting Henry's mode of speech, a mode which is acceptable on a canal barge, but one which is not proper for a garden party.

Mrs. Higgins then inquires into the nature of the household arrangement, or more specifically, where does Eliza live? Higgins bluntly and openly confesses, "With us, of course." Mrs. Higgins then points out to the two men a problem that neither of them has considered: what is to be done with Eliza after they have finished their little experiment? They are giving Eliza "the manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income." Soon Eliza will be so well trained and be such a lady that no one will hire her, and she will have nothing to live on — and no job. Mrs. Higgins is assured by both men that there is nothing to worry about; they will do whatever is right by her. After all, Eliza is such a mimic that she keeps them constantly laughing by her imitations of other people's accents and affectations. As her son and his friend leave, Mrs. Higgins returns impatiently and angrily to her work at her writing table, but she cannot concentrate. "Oh, men! ! men! ! men! !" she exclaims.

## Analysis

Between Act II and Act III, an undisclosed amount of time has elapsed, enough time to allow Eliza to master some of the basics of pronunciation but not enough time for her to master proper subject matter or the theme of discussion. When she appears at Mrs. Higgins', there is an obvious contrast. No longer is she the flighty Eliza of the first two acts; now, she is the reserved Eliza; she is "exquisitely dressed," and she "produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty" that everyone is quite taken aback. The contrast on stage has to be tremendous or else the Eynsford-Hills would recognize her as the flower girl from the encounter in the first act. Accordingly, we, the audience, are delighted that they are so inept that they do not recognize her. The new Eliza seemingly fits in well in these new contrasting surroundings; that is, Mrs. Higgins'



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

drawing room is described as being very formal with exquisitely refined furniture of the Chippendale style, furnished with excellent oil paintings and other art objects. Thus, the artificial formality of Eliza's speech blends well with the stiff formality of the highly decorative setting.

Following through with the Pygmalion legend, this act shows us Pygmalion's work of art — his Galatea of mythology — emerging in the figure of Eliza. Here is the beginning of the artistic creation making her first appearance, and everything about the creation suggests that it will be, in its finished form, a true masterpiece. Even at this point, Freddy Eynsford-Hill is totally smitten by Eliza's beauty and her superb uniqueness.

At the beginning of the act, the relationship between Mrs. Higgins and her son is humorous because the mother's attitude toward her son is so eccentric and because she expresses herself with as much forthright honesty as does her son. The depiction of Mrs. Higgins is that of an excellent personality filled with tolerance, intelligence, and imagination. Like Mrs. Pearce, she is immediately concerned over the fate of this "living doll" that Higgins has created. This depiction is important because Shaw maintains later in his epilogue that one of the reasons for Eliza's rejection of the possibility of marriage to Higgins is that she could never live up to Mrs. Higgins' standards, that she could never equal Mrs. Higgins' grasp of life.

Part of the dramatic humor of this act lies in the fact that we, the audience, know who the Eynsford-Hills are, but that Professor Higgins can't remember where he might have seen them, which makes us superior to the very superior Higgins. Throughout the scene, Higgins lives up to Mrs. Higgins' expectations — that is, he is too outspoken, "rather trying on more commonplace occasions," he uses improper language, and, in general, he has an amazing lack of manners.

With Higgins' failure in the realm of manners, we are then presented to Eliza, who will now perform in this same setting. Higgins has, we hear, coached her on not only how to pronounce her words, but also on "what she pronounces." This anticipates Eliza's vulgar narration of the death of her aunt. This scene, with Eliza demonstrating her newly acquired knowledge, is the central scene of this act. It is in this scene, while Eliza is discussing the weather, that in both the film version and the musical comedy version, Eliza pronounces her now-famous line: "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain." The comedy of this scene relies upon the contrast between Eliza's mode of speech and her subject matter. She has been trained to pronounce words with impeccable perfection, but as Higgins feared, she has not learned what is proper to discuss and what is not. Higgins thought wrongly that he was safe in confining her subject to the weather and to one's health. It is, of course, humorously comic that Eliza does confine herself to these two supposedly safe subjects, but naively, she narrates some rather bizarre details of her aunt's death, using the terminology of the slums, yet pronouncing the unsavory words with complete precision. Her enunciation of improper words makes the entire narration comically incongruous. As a result,



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

behind the outward, new facade of Eliza lies an uncarved interior which remains on the vulgar side.

In spite of the squalid, if beautifully spoken, narration of her aunt's death, Eliza possesses an element of sincerity in contrast to the silly affectation of Miss Clara Eynsford-Hill's attempt to duplicate the "new manner of small talk." After Eliza leaves, Mrs. Eynsford-Hill asserts that she cannot become accustomed to young ladies using such words as "bloody," "beastly," and "filthy," and so forth. Actually, Shaw himself was put off by "proper" young ladies, such as Clara, attempting to use common expressions; he once maintained that "a flower girl's conversation is much more picturesque, [and has] much better rhetoric, [is] much more concise, interesting, and arresting than the conversation of the drawing-room, and that the moment she begins to speak beautifully she gains an advantage by the intensity of her experience and the strength of her feeling about it."

After Eliza departs, Mrs. Higgins also comments on the disparity between Eliza's speech and her subject matter. As noted, part of Eliza's problem is that she is learning the English language anew from Professor Henry Higgins, who (despite the fact that he is a professor) uses speech which is not fit for the drawing room. Mrs. Higgins then returns to Shaw's original Pygmalion theme when she points out that Eliza is a triumph of Higgins' art and the art of the dressmaker; but that Eliza is not yet a presentable person. She is only partially carved. The thrill of the experiment for Higgins is also part of the Pygmalion theme; as he tells his mother: "You have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her." Higgins, then, is clearly the artist, Pygmalion, and Eliza is Galatea: The only difference between life and the myth is that here the artist is not falling in love with his creation and, ultimately, he will not be able to control his own creation. Ultimately, Eliza will have a soul and a will of her own, completely independent of her creator. At present, however, her creator is content to be amused by his creation since Eliza loves to mimic all sorts of people, especially all of these people after she, Higgins, and Pickering return home.

#### Act 4

Act IV begins some time later and takes place in Higgins' laboratory-living room. The scene opens on the night after there has earlier been a great success where Eliza was presented as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party, as was stipulated in the original wager between Higgins and Pickering. Eliza has been a smashing success. Thus, when the scene opens, Higgins and Pickering are celebrating their triumph. (By this time, the actual financial terms of the wager are insignificant; Pickering has helped train Eliza and is sharing in the triumph, even though he has lost the wager.)



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

Eliza enters; she is brilliantly dressed in impeccable taste but her "expression is almost tragic." Immediately, Higgins begins to look for his slippers, and he is so busy congratulating himself on his great success that he is unaware that Eliza has left the room and has returned with his slippers; to fetch Higgins' slippers is apparently another accepted aspect of her training.

As Higgins and Pickering sit down and discuss the great triumph of the day, we hear that Eliza has been a tremendous success not only at the garden party, but also at the dinner party and at the opera later. Higgins then admits that after the first few minutes, it became obviously apparent that he was going to easily win his bet with Pickering, and, as a result, he was bored for the rest of the time. In contrast, Pickering rather enjoyed himself, especially the very professional manner in which Eliza carried the entire charade off. Pickering then retires for the evening, followed by Higgins, yelling to Eliza to put out the lights.

Alone, Eliza gives vent to her pent-up fury as she flings herself furiously onto the floor, raging. At that moment, Higgins returns, looking for his slippers, which Eliza hurls at him with all her force. He is totally baffled by her display of anger. He is furthermore astounded by her calling him a "selfish brute" who is ready to throw her back into the gutter now that she has won his bet for him. Higgins is dumbfounded at her presumptuous claim; he refuses to acknowledge that she had anything to do with his winning the bet. The entire feat was accomplished by his coaching and his brilliance. When she physically attacks him, asking what is to become of her, Higgins restrains her and says, "What does it matter what becomes of you?" Higgins' brusqueness, however, subsides, and he relents enough to question her about her anxieties and to offer a glass of champagne to relieve the strain of the day. He assures her that she will feel better now that the garden party is over. Eliza's concerns, however, clearly and seriously involve the future. She asks: "What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?" Even though both Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins have warned Higgins about this dilemma, he has obviously never given it a moment's thought. He can't imagine that she will have any difficulty in finding something to do — or even in marrying someone. After all, not all men are "confirmed old bachelors" like Higgins and Pickering. Maybe Mrs. Higgins could find a young chap for her. Eliza then informs him that all that she has ever done is sell flowers; now, as a lady, she can't even sell flowers; all she can hope to do is sell herself. She wishes Higgins had left her where he found her. (She has apparently forgotten that she came to see Higgins, not the other way around.)

Higgins returns to Eliza's original desire to work in a flower shop, and he suggests that Pickering could perhaps set up Eliza in her own shop. Higgins thinks this solution settles everything, and once again, looking for his slippers, he prepares to retire. But Eliza has one more question. She wants to know what clothes belong to her, personally — that is, what clothes may she keep and what clothes belong to the "experiment." After all, Higgins and Pickering might need some of the clothes for the next girl they pick up to experiment on. She reminds Higgins of her past: "I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful." Higgins tells her that she





# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

can take all the clothes, but she cannot have the jewelry; it was rented. She antagonizes him further by asking him to take the jewelry to his room so there will be no "risk of their being missing." She also returns a ring which he bought her, but he throws the ring so angrily into the fireplace that Eliza crouches over the piano, her hands over her face, crying, "Don't you hit me." Higgins now feels wounded, and when Eliza tells him that he had better leave a note for Mrs. Pearce because she (Eliza) won't do his errands any more, he leaves, slamming the door savagely and calling Eliza "a heartless guttersnipe." Alone, Eliza senses her triumph over the master; thus, she quickly kneels and digs the ring out of the ashes. She finds it, considers it for a moment, and then flings it down and goes upstairs in a rage.

## Analysis

This act presents the completion of the artist's masterpiece; here is the fully realized Galatea that Pygmalion created in the form of the living Eliza. Here, we see a person completely transformed from the "guttersnipe" that we saw in Covent Garden in the first act. At the beginning of the act, both Pickering and Higgins are so absorbed in their own triumph that both fail to realize that the success of the experiment belongs as much to Eliza as it does to their teaching. In fact, when Eliza suggests that she won their bet for them, Higgins repudiates her claim vehemently: "You won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! I won it." What neither Pickering nor Higgins takes into account is the stupendous effort that Eliza herself has contributed to the entire endeavor. As we shall see in the next act, Mrs. Higgins certainly recognizes Eliza's contribution, but both men are so absorbed in their own achievement that they fail to grasp the fact that Eliza has worked exceedingly hard to be able to speak like a lady; as a result, she developed an intense devotion and loyalty towards her two masters — not a love devotion, but a deep and sincere devotion and also a strong desire to please. Thus, at the beginning of this act, when the men ignore her, her pent-up fury turns to rage. The image which Shaw uses is that of a well-trained puppy dog fetching its master's slippers. At the beginning of the act, Eliza does, in fact, fetch Higgins' slippers. The men, however, fail to pet and admire the "puppy" for her achievements, and therefore the trained puppy turns on its masters. In the next act, this image of the trained dog fetching slippers will be continued and will be developed as a central metaphor. Here, the slippers are dropped, literally, by having Eliza throw them at the master. However much Eliza has changed outwardly, this act of rage aligns her with the Eliza of Covent Garden of the first act.

In the original myth, Pygmalion had to pray to the gods to give his creation a soul. What Higgins as a creative artist did not realize was that his Galatea had a soul already. He has been able to



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

## B.A. DEPARTMENT

### MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

polish the outside to a high degree of mechanical perfection, but he failed to note that at the same time, his creation was developing an inner soul and a mind of her own.

Whereas Mrs. Pearce's and Mrs. Higgins' first concern was what would happen to Eliza after the transformation, this has now become a question of major importance for Eliza. In a conventional type of romantic comedy, the ending would probably show the total success of the experiment with the audience leaving the theater with the knowledge of Eliza's triumph at the ambassador's party and with Eliza and her master's falling in love, just as it happened in the myth. However, Shaw was interested in what happened after the triumph. And Eliza herself asks, what is she fit for, and where is she to go, and what will become of her? Higgins has been so completely involved with his experiment and the success of it that this question has never seriously entered his mind. Even now, when it is pointed out to him, he cannot take it seriously. Eliza knows that she absolutely cannot return to her old way of making a living, for she is now trained to be a lady and has no visible means to support herself in the position for which she is now trained. Thus Higgins has created a work of art without considering what he will do with this work of art after its exhibit is over. When Higgins suggests some sort of marriage, Shaw is making another dig at social standards. That is, when Eliza was a flower girl, she sold flowers and not her person; now that she is Lady Eliza, she can't sell flowers anymore (that would be beneath her) but she can sell herself.

At the end of the act, Eliza needles Higgins in a desperate attempt to break through his outer veneer. In her own repressed emotions, she wants to see him hurt just like she has been hurt; she wants to penetrate the god-like distance that Higgins surrounds himself with; thus, she taunts him until she makes him lose his temper, and she is able to enjoy the spectacle of a so-called, self-proclaimed god losing his self-control — that is, Higgins is a "god" now made human, with human emotions and fury.

## Act 5

This act returns to Mrs. Higgins' drawing room as the parlor maid comes in to tell Mrs. Higgins that the Professor and the Colonel are downstairs telephoning the police and that Mr. Henry is "in a state." Mrs. Higgins sends word upstairs to Eliza to remain in her room until she sends for her. Higgins enters, loudly proclaiming Eliza's disappearance, which has distracted his entire routine since he has relied on her to keep up his appointment book for him. Mrs. Higgins is expressing her disapproval of their having informed the police when the maid announces the arrival of Mr. Doolittle, whom she describes as being a gentleman dressed brilliantly in a new frock coat and other elegant attire. He enters and begins immediately accusing Higgins of being responsible for his present affluent condition; that is, he has come into a very large amount of



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

money which has forced him to become respectable. It has, he says, "ruined me. Destroyed my happiness. Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of middle-class morality." It seems that for a joke, Higgins mentioned Doolittle's name to a wealthy American as being "the most original moralist at present in England," and, as a result, the American, in his will, left an immense trust fund to Doolittle if he would lecture six times a year on moral reforms. As a result, Doolittle has lost his free and easy ways and is now forced to conform to middle-class morality, along with its confining respectability. The sum is so large that Doolittle is intimidated and can't properly give it up. Mrs. Higgins is pleased and sees now that Eliza can return home and live with her father in his new wealthy status, but Higgins protests strongly that he bought Eliza for five pounds and that Doolittle can't interfere unless he is a rogue, which Doolittle readily admits that he is — that is, he's part honest and part rogue, "a little of both . . . like the rest of us."

Mrs. Higgins then informs them that Eliza is upstairs, but before she is to be sent for, Higgins must promise to behave. Mrs. Higgins then reprimands both Higgins and Pickering for being so completely self-centered and inconsiderate of Eliza's feelings. She asks Doolittle to retire for a moment until Eliza becomes reconciled with Higgins and Pickering. Eliza enters and addresses the two men in a refined, distant, and assured manner. Her dignified carriage and her ease of manner unnerves Higgins, who immediately attempts to treat her as his "property," as something he created "out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden." Eliza, however, does not allow Higgins to rattle her by his insulting manners; instead, she thanks Colonel Pickering for his having always treated her as a lady and never as a guttersnipe. She says furthermore that everything that she has learned about manners has been due to the Colonel, and she now realizes that it is not what a person does, but how she is treated that makes her a lady: "The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will, but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will." She learned grammar and pronunciation from Professor Higgins, but it was from Colonel Pickering that she learned self-respect. When she refuses to return to Wimpole Street, Higgins predicts that she will "relapse into the gutter in three weeks" without him. Eliza, however, says that she could not utter the old sounds if she tried and, at that moment, her father, Mr. Doolittle, appears at the window in all his splendid attire, and Eliza spontaneously emits one of her old guttural sounds — "A-a-a-a-ah-ow-ooh!" — an exclamation that utterly delights and vindicates Higgins.

Doolittle has come to announce his marriage and to ask Eliza to attend the wedding. He explains that, like himself, his common-law wife has also been defeated by middle-class morality: "respectability has broke all the spirit out of her." When Eliza goes upstairs to get ready to accompany her father to his wedding, Doolittle confesses that he is nervous because he has never been married before — not even to Eliza's mother — but he has never told this to Eliza. Mrs. Higgins says that she will also attend the wedding with Eliza, and Pickering leaves with the bridegroom.



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

As Eliza is about to leave, Higgins blocks the doorway. He says that he wants Eliza to come back, but he will not change his manners, which he maintains are exactly the same as the Colonel's. Eliza disagrees: "That's not true," she says, "He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess." To which Higgins replies, "And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl." Higgins continues, maintaining that good manners or bad manners are not important; instead, it is more important to have the same manners for all people. If he has treated her badly, she has to admit that she has never seen him treat someone else differently or better. He is proud that she is now independent — in fact, it's one of the basic things that he has wanted her to hear — but he insists that he can get along quite well without her, even though he admits: "I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance." Eliza then reminds him that he has both her voice and her "appearance" in numerous photographs and recordings; when he feels lonesome, he can turn on one of his recordings of her. Higgins counters, however, that he can't turn her "soul" on, and he says, furthermore, that he values quality more than service, and he points out that Eliza cannot buy a claim on him "by fetching my slippers and my spectacles." In fact, her "little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers" can in no way compare to the greatness of his creation — that is, the Duchess Eliza.

At this point, Eliza is absolutely confused as to what course her life is to take. She sorely regrets the loss of independence which she once had. Higgins offers to adopt her or settle money on her, but he is horrified when he hears that Freddy Eynsford-Hill is romantically interested in her; Freddy, Higgins says, can't "make anything of" her. Eliza responds that maybe she can do something for Freddy; after all, she only wants to be natural, and she wants a little kindness, which Freddy can certainly give to her. She knows that she cannot return to her old way of life, and she cannot stand the idea of living "with a low common man after you two" (Higgins and Pickering), and she certainly doesn't intend to go to her father's house to live; thus, as soon as possible, she will marry Freddy.

Higgins is horrified at her conclusion, and he loudly asserts, "I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy." But Eliza is determined to have her independence, and therefore she decides that she will teach. What in heaven's name will she teach, Higgins asks, and he is totally astonished when she announces that she will teach phonetics. She reminds him what a good ear she has, and, furthermore, she has more manners than he has and, therefore, she will be able to advertise and can thus become financially independent. Eliza is no longer frightened of Higgins, and she defies him to strike her. Suddenly Higgins reverses himself; he admires her for her independence: her defiance is far "better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles." But even after she has asserted her independence, Higgins assumes that she will decide to return to Wimpole Street and they — Higgins, Pickering, and Eliza — will be "three old bachelors" together instead of their living together formerly as, in Higgins' words, "two men and a silly girl." At that moment, Mrs. Higgins returns to say that Eliza's carriage is waiting. Higgins, who knows that he cannot behave himself in church, has decided to stay behind, and so Eliza bids him goodbye, saying that they will not see each other again. Higgins ignores this



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

comment and, instead, he gives Eliza some errands to do on the way home. Eliza disdainfully leaves, telling him to buy the gloves and the tie himself. Mrs. Higgins fears that Henry has spoiled the girl, and she volunteers to do his errands, but Higgins is confident that Eliza will buy them herself.

## Analysis

Act V presents the fully realized Galatea, the creation of the artist, alive in all of her splendor. The "romance" of the play's subtitle refers, of course, to the complete transformation of the "guttersnipe," the "squashed cabbage leaf" of the first act, into this delightful creature who is more magnificent than any real duchess — more real because, as it develops during the course of this act, Eliza has manners which are better and more polished than most duchesses. Furthermore, unlike the original Liza, the flower girl, this new Eliza has learned to control her emotional outbursts completely; now, her calculated calm and her poised reserve cause the normally self-contained and super-rational Higgins to lose his temper. We can now say confidently that the work of art has become superior to the creator.

The opening of the act implies that the creator, Higgins, could never conceive of the fact that his creation would, of her own volition, walk out on him. His colossal conceit (an assessment that is supported by Colonel Pickering) makes Higgins assume that Eliza has been kidnapped or that something horrible has happened that will require notifying the police. His colossal ego will not or cannot entertain the idea that she might have now gained enough independence to strike out on her own. In fact, it is not until the end of the act that Higgins finally recognizes that the work of art is now independent of its creator and is thus separate from him; she has no further need of him. Therefore, for any but the most sentimental readers, there is nothing in these acts that could possibly suggest a romantic entanglement between the two. Higgins will never accept Eliza as an equal; he will always try to bully her, even though he says that he likes her better now that she no longer fetches his slippers and spectacles. Eliza, having learned that manners involve not only her own conduct but also how other people treat her, could never become involved with a man who constantly treats her as though she were a flower girl.

This act also shows the comical transformation of Alfred Doolittle. Earlier, he was completely content to be a member of the "undeserving poor," and he took special delight in ridiculing and flouting the morals of the middle class. Now he is thrust completely into this morality, which necessitates that he obey some of their dreadful conventions, such as dressing properly and marrying the woman with whom he has been living. It has, as he feared earlier, placed him in a position of responsibility and it has, therefore, destroyed his cherished independence. Whereas earlier he was frightened to accept ten pounds rather than five pounds because ten might



# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

---

necessitate some degree of responsibility, now he is in control of an immense sum and, consequently, the dreadful poor will be badgering him constantly for handouts. Now he fears that not only will he have to marry, but that he might have to help support Eliza, whom he threw out over two years ago. He can even tell Higgins: "Have some consideration for my feelings as a middle-class man." Thus, with this inverted statement, Doolittle has sunk completely into the horrible complacency of middle-class morality.

At the end of the play, the two opposing forces are clearly before us: Higgins ends up so devoted to improving mankind in general that he lacks the ability to be decent to a single member of mankind, to a fine human being such as Eliza. He can teach her to be a magnificent duchess, a Galatea, a work of art, but he lacks sufficient tact in their personal relationship to avoid constantly hurting her feelings. In his devotion to reforming the entire human race, he trods innocently and unmercifully on a single individual human being. When Eliza remarks that she will not be walked on, Higgins answers her in his usual bullying fashion: "Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you."

Even though Higgins has "grown accustomed to [her] face and voice," it is only because they are convenient pieces to be used, but he can get along without them. Thus the central conflict of the play is now stated: Higgins is the crusading scientist who is determined to save the world, even though he might have to hurt those closest to him. Eliza, on the other hand, wishes to be the recipient of a little loving kindness, and if it means marrying Freddy Eynsford-Hill in order to find this human companionship and warmth, then she will do so.

Consequently, with the conflict clearly stated for Higgins, the essence of human life is through mutual improvement; for Eliza, it is through human loving and commitment — then only the most sloppy, sentimental reader could ever think that their relationship will ever change

## Summary

When the play ends, the audience is left to ponder what will happen to the characters later; for the sentimentalist, it is a foregone conclusion that Higgins and Eliza will probably marry, even though there is ample indication in the play that they will not. Thus, in the prose "Sequel," Shaw reasserts his premise that such a wedding between Higgins and Eliza is absolutely impossible, and he explains again that he subtitled his play a "romance" because the technical meaning of "romance" refers to anything that was highly improbable; for example, the transformation of a flower girl into a duchess in six months is indeed highly improbable. A romance, however, also can suggest a "happy ending," and Shaw says he is not interested in such an ending to his story. He will not allow his creation, Eliza, to marry such a misfit as Higgins simply to satisfy the whims of the sentimentalists of the world, even though these sentimental people outnumber the realists. First of all, Eliza is beautiful, and she is now also intelligent, desirable, and witty enough





# SHREE H.N.SHUKLA GROUP OF COLLEGES, RAJKOT

B.A. DEPARTMENT

MATERIAL

CLASS NAME: S.Y.B.A. SEM 3

SUBJECT NAME: - ENGLISH

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to find a husband closer to her own age; after all, Higgins is over twenty years her senior. Eliza herself also knows that she is young enough to find someone much more desirable than Higgins. Second, Eliza recognizes that Mrs. Higgins is the model mother — that is, she is a woman of unusual charm and intelligence, and she possesses a tolerance for Higgins' idiosyncratic manners while sweetly disapproving of them. Eliza is now intelligent enough to know she would be a rival to this "irresistible wealthy" woman. Third, Eliza does not want to be a "second fiddle" to Higgins' study of phonetics and the English language; she knows that Higgins' experiments will always come first, and she would have to be content with being second place in his life. Last, Eliza, once having gained her independence, simply has no desire to be constantly combating Higgins' wit, his resentment, his bullying, and the condescendingly superior way which he takes with her. Higgins would always remind her of her origins and would attempt to evade her anger after he had bullied her. Thus, she reasons, why not marry Freddy Eynsford-Hill? He worships her, and he would always treat her as a lady. But Freddy is not equipped to earn a living, and Mrs. Eynsford-Hill could not offer them financial assistance. Eliza's father has risen so socially high in the world that he spends all he has to keep up his appearance and, therefore, cannot be of financial assistance to them. Consequently, Colonel Pickering again comes to the rescue and sets them up in a flower shop, a move which violates Mrs. Eynsford-Hill's concept that people in trade are inferior people. Unfortunately, neither Eliza, who only sold flowers for a pittance earlier, nor Freddy has the slightest concept of how to run a shop, and thus the Colonel has to constantly rescue them from economic disaster. Through it all, Higgins is delighted that Freddy is a failure; it justifies his opinion of the young man. But by attending night school, by hiring outside help, by luck, and by adding food items for sale, the shop began to prosper.

Eliza is still a part of Wimpole Street and she is still interested vaguely in Higgins, but she keeps him at a distance and holds his derisions of Freddy to a minimum. She is also very much beloved by Colonel Pickering, and she returns his love. In Shaw's words, Eliza "likes Freddy and she likes the Colonel; and she does not like Higgins and Mr. Doolittle. Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable."